

“Invitus, Regina”: Aeneas Cast as the Unwilling and Unfit Hero

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ABSTRACT

A particular instance of intertextuality that has received much critical attention is a line of the *Aeneid* spoken by Aeneas to Dido in the underworld: *invitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi* (6.460). Its striking similarity to a line from Catullus 66 spoken by a lock of hair (*invita, o regina, tuo de vertice cessi*; 39) has led to a variety of scholarly explanations. In this thesis I examine the major interpretations, emphasizing the readings that focus on the effect this borrowing has on our understanding of Aeneas as a character, and arguing that his quotation of this line primarily causes him to appear hesitant and mock-heroic. In order to expand the interpretation of Aeneas' words, I also examine the poem of Catullus and its feminine tone, as well as similes and descriptions of Aeneas in the *Aeneid* that similarly cast doubt on the appropriateness of his relationship to Dido and his adequacy as an epic hero.

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I. Introduction

Vergil is generally considered one of the most allusive of the ancient authors; because of this the multitude of instances of intertextuality in his work have been sought out and examined since antiquity, and even his references that have the most unclear sources have been analyzed.¹ One particular example of Vergilian intertextuality has met with a varied reception, not because the borrowing is unclear, but on the contrary because it is such an obvious reference, and at the same time so difficult to explain in its context. This borrowing occurs in the *Aeneid*, during Aeneas' address to the ghost of Dido in the underworld, when as an attempt to placate her, he utters the line: "*invitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi*" ("Queen, I left unwillingly from your shore"; 6.460). As many scholars have noted, these words bear an undeniable resemblance to a line from Catullus: "*invita, o regina, tuo de vertice cessi*" ("Oh queen, I left unwillingly from your head"; 66.39). However, Catullus' poem provides quite a different context for this line, within a poem that is generally read as light and comic;² the words are here told from the point of view of a lock of hair which laments its separation from its mistress, and which subsequently goes on to become a constellation.

Among the many discussions of the instances and functions of intertextuality among Latin authors, major critics such as Richard Thomas and Stephen Hinds have generally emphasized the sheer number of examples that they see present in poetry. Both have argued convincingly for a broader understanding of the practice, but there remains much to be said of the more obvious and jarring examples, such as the borrowing that

¹ Farrell 3.

² There are, however, those such as R. Griffith who argue that Catullus 66 is not as lighthearted as it at first appears. His argument will be treated below.

occurs at *Aeneid* 6.460. Additionally, this particular example of intertextuality is unique because Vergil chose to place the borrowing from Catullus directly and with no introduction in the mouth of his hero Aeneas, who appears to be unaware that his words to Dido were first spoken by a lock of hair. The work of Conte on intertextuality is useful here, not only because he examines this particular example, but because he also comments more generally on the sense of incongruity brought about by those cases of intertextuality that occur between passages of noticeably different emotional tone. Conte explains that the reader who comes across this type of intertextuality will first note “the contrast between the stylistic register and the literary aims of the text that has been intruded upon.”³ Conte further explains why this particular type of intertextuality is so jarring:

As a result of the lack of fit between the inserted material and the organic whole, both elements signal their specific identity, and one appears to reject the other. As with metaphor, we find a gap, a space to be filled and bridged by the figure of irony. But whereas metaphor uses the trope perfectly to superimpose two elements to form a single image, in irony these two elements remain opposed. The hiatus is not filled or reduced by the displacement implicit in the violence of the juxtaposition. The two elements remain far apart, and the tension between them is irreducible.⁴

Vergil’s source and the context in which he has placed these lines do appear to be irreconcilable. Therefore, if we can assume that Vergil committed this act of intertextuality intentionally,⁵ I would argue that the best interpretation must focus on the reader’s sense of surprise at the incongruity between the mock-epic words uttered by the

³ Conte 90. When commenting on this particular instance of intertextuality, Conte argued that both Vergil and his readers would have first recognized the disparity between the high dramatic style of the lock’s words and their ironic setting in the poem of Catullus. He then comes to the conclusion that Vergil has restored the high style to a more fitting setting; therefore in his view the incongruity occurs not in Vergil, but in Catullus.

⁴ Conte 87.

⁵ There are, however, those (such as Williams, cited below) who see the borrowing as unintentional.

character himself and the seriousness of the epic world. In this thesis I will examine the nature of Vergil's source and the way in which its feminine tone affects our reading of Aeneas as a character. Additionally, I will look at the effect of this line within the broader context of the *Aeneid*, demonstrating that the inadequacy Aeneas displays at this moment is reinforced elsewhere, particularly by the nature of his relationship to Dido.

II. Vergil's Use of Catullan Similes

As mentioned above, Vergil was adept at employing a number of sources intertextually, but before examining further the particular effect of Vergil's echo at *Aeneid* 6.460, it is worthwhile to take note of the ways in which he more typically incorporates the poems of Catullus in his epic. Vergil used Catullus as an intertextual source in the *Aeneid* less often than he did authors of epic; nevertheless Catullan echoes appear throughout, often at moments of extreme emotion.⁶ There is one such echo within the Nisus and Euryalus episode, a section that has the Doloneia of Homer's *Iliad* as a primary source for its intertextuality. At the moment of Euryalus' death, however, we find a simile comparing the dying Euryalus to flowers that blends two of Vergil's sources, Catullus and Homer:

*purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro
languescit moriens, lassoque papavera collo
dimisere caput pluvia cum forte gravantur.* (9.435-37)

Just as a crimson flower becomes weak and dies when cut down by the plough, and as the poppy, because its stem has been weakened, is weighed down by chance in the rain and has put down its head.

⁶ Nappa 394.

The first of the two comparisons, which contains the image of the plough, echoes the imagery found at the end of Catullus poem 11, in which the author renounces his devotion to the woman he had loved. Although the poem is at heart a message of repudiation, the majority of its twenty-four lines is devoted to a catalogue of hypothetical travels. It is only at the close of the poem that he mentions the message that he wishes his friends to give to the woman; after speaking dismissively of her, he closes with a touching simile that laments his love that has been lost:

*nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem
qui illius culpa cecidit velut prati
ultima flos, praetereunte postquam
tactus aratro est. (21-24)*

Let her not look, as before, to my love, which fell by fault of her just as the flower at the edge of the meadow, after it has been touched by the passing plow.

The other half of Vergil's simile, the poppy bent down in the rain, is borrowed from a more typical source for an epic comparison: a simile at the death of the Trojan hero Gorgythion in a battle scene from Homer's *Iliad*:

μήκων δ' ὥς ἐτέρωσε κάρη βάλεν, ἣ τ' ἐνὶ κήπῳ
καρπῷ βριθομένη νοτίῃσιν τε εἰαρινῇσιν. (8.306-7)

He cast down his head as the poppy in the garden, heavy laden with its seed and the spring rain.

There is little that is unusual in the Homeric borrowing here. The entire Nisus and Euryalus episode, an ill-fated mission that takes them into the camp of the Rutulians, is in many ways Vergil's adaptation of the mission of Odysseus and Diomedes in Book 10 of the *Iliad*. Thus it seems fitting that Vergil's Euryalus should die by way of a familiar Homeric image. However, the death described in this scene of the *Iliad* is not that of one of the main heroes of Homer's epic, but of a rather insignificant character. Gorgythion, a

son of Priam, is killed by an arrow that had been intended for Hector. His death is portrayed in this simile as a tragic accident, but an inevitable result of battle.⁷ On the other hand, Euryalus' death (and that of Nisus after him) is treated as a sort of mini-epic within the *Aeneid*.

Although there are some differences between Homer's and Vergil's use of the poppy image, it is not overall an unexpected borrowing. It is perhaps a bit more surprising, however, to see that Vergil has supplemented Homer's simile with one from Catullus. It remains to consider how the addition of Catullus' image changes our reading of the death of Euryalus. It may not be as apparently absurd as Aeneas quoting a lock of hair in his final and emotional speech to Dido, but nonetheless it does seem out of place to borrow an image from Catullus' poem of a bitter break-up in a moving death scene of a young warrior. Given Vergil's skill and obvious intention with his allusions, his choice to join his two sources must be due to more than the fact that the similes of Homer and Catullus could be melded together well because they had so much in common.

The Nisus and Euryalus interlude has often been treated as independent from the rest of the *Aeneid* and praised as a moving mini-epic.⁸ The relationship between the two men is generally viewed as romantic in nature, with Euryalus as the boyish object of Nisus' affection. The elements of the simile Vergil borrows from Catullus are generally sexual; the use of plowing as a metaphor for sexual activity was common in poetry, although Catullus was unique in reversing the male and female roles in his use of it.⁹ Vergil's use of this type of imagery effectively hints at the likely homosexual relationship

⁷ Johnson 63.

⁸ Petrini 21, who also cites Mendell (1951).

⁹ Mulroy 244.

between the two men, which could explain why he had decided to use this particular simile from Catullus here. Vergil, however, stretches the image further by removing it from the erotic setting expected from Catullus and placing it instead in a scene of violence. In Vergil's use of the simile, the sexuality of Euryalus has been replaced with the image of his death, "the flower cut down as a symbol for androgynous youth devirginated by the violence of mortal wound."¹⁰ In his analysis of the borrowing, Putnam goes on to praise Vergil's use of the image because it has the effect of lyricizing this point of his epic; he claims that in this way Vergil has placed the final stress of the Nisus and Euryalus episode on immediate human emotion just as Catullus had done with his poem, as opposed to what is often seen as the poetic focus of the *Aeneid*, the impersonal strength of the empire and its future glory.¹¹

Similarly, the emotional scene at the funeral of Pallas in Book 11 is accompanied by a related flower simile:

*qualem virgineo demessum pollice florem
seu mollis violae seu languentis hyacinthi,
cui neque fulgor adhuc nec dum sua forma recessit,
non iam mater alit tellus virisque ministrat.* (11.68-71)

Like a flower plucked by a maiden's finger, of the soft violet or the wilting hyacinth, whose splendor nor beauty has yet faded, but for which mother earth no longer provides nourishment nor supplies strength.

Vergil's words are again reminiscent of Catullus, particularly a simile employed within his epithalamion:

*ut flos in saeptis secretus nascitur hortis,
ignotus pecori, nullo convolsus aratro,
quem mulcent aerae, firmat sol, educat imber;
multi illum pueri, multae optavere puellae:* (62. 39-44)

¹⁰ Putnam 92.

¹¹ Ibid. 92.

Just as a flower grows hidden in enclosed gardens, unknown by the flock, not uprooted by any plough, which the breezes stroke, the sun strengthens, rainstorms bring up. Many boys, many girls have desired it.

Catullus' simile takes place within a celebration of a marriage, and the unplucked flower is compared to a young woman who has remained chaste; each is desirable only while its purity is guarded. Therefore, as with the death of Euryalus, Vergil once again has borrowed a simile rooted in sexual imagery and appropriated it into a scene of violence and loss. In Catullus' poem the simile stands as a warning to young maidens to guard their purity so that they can be as appreciated as the flower. In Vergil's rendering, however, the same flower has already suffered an undesirable fate, one that is compared instead to the tragic death of a young hero.

Both similes bear some resemblance to the Catullan echo employed in Book 6; Vergil is quite adept at taking recognizable images from the poetry of Catullus and placing them in contexts that are at first jarring to readers who are familiar with their origin. Both the sexual context of the flower similes and the mock-epic context of the quote from the lock of hair seem at first unfitting to the epic world of the *Aeneid*. However, in each instance Vergil has taken these images and used their familiarity to add layers of meaning to his characters, and thus, to our perception of them. The borrowing at 6.460 is unlike these others in one significant way: the flower similes, like most of Vergil's allusions, call attention to themselves as a rhetorical device in the author's own voice, and because they are similes based upon the similes of his sources, they are more clearly examples of Vergil demonstrating his place in the poetic tradition. The borrowing of the *invita, regina* line, however, is lifted almost straight from its Catullan context and placed in the mouth of Aeneas the character. In this way it is in fact more shocking in its

absurdity, and leads the reader to make judgment upon Aeneas as a character at that moment, particularly upon the lack of self-awareness that would lead him to speak in this way.

III. *Aeneid* 6.460 in its Epic Context

Given the seeming incongruity of the contexts of the lines in these poems of Vergil and Catullus, many scholars have put forth differing theories about Vergil's echo. For quite some time the prevailing argument, provided by commentators such as R. D. Williams, was that the echo was an unintentional borrowing on Vergil's part.¹² However, in recent decades, scholars have mined the texts of both authors in order to expand their understanding of the borrowing. Some argue that Vergil is calling to mind a more tragic theme of Catullus' work, while others believe that he is primarily looking ahead to Aeneas' own promised ascent into heaven. While Vergil's intent with this line will never be completely clear, what remains is to examine the effect this allusion has on the reader's view of the character of Aeneas. Although a variety of interpretations are possible, it must not be forgotten that the reader's initial reaction to these words is one of disbelief, and therefore the most compelling reading of the line will reinforce this sense of shock. These are not the fitting words of a hero. I will maintain that Aeneas appears not only oblivious to the pain he is continuing to cause, but even mock-heroic as he channels the voice of a lock of hair. In addition, when he speaks this line Aeneas demonstrates that he is still the unwilling hero who is locked in his past; like the lock of

¹² Williams 154.

hair that wishes to be reunited with its mistress, he is at this point lamenting his separation from Dido instead of turning toward his future.

Many scholars have attempted to add layers of meaning and allusion to Vergil's use of Catullus here; nevertheless there are a few who argue that while the echo was clearly intentional, it is unnecessary to stretch the meaning of the line. Harrison states, "The clash that so concerns the modern reader was obviously of no importance to Virgil. His aim was simply to display cleverness and originality in the way he employed his model," using a comic source during a tragic moment.¹³ Similarly, in his commentary, Austin merely states that Vergil's poetic authority meant that he was free to "ennoble" a comic poem without any consequence.¹⁴ No doubt Vergil was quite capable of displaying such cleverness, but there is no reason to assume he had no purpose beyond an artful display. It is also too much to assume that his readers would not inevitably begin thinking of Catullus' poem with such a clear echo appearing in such an unlikely place. Ultimately, the interpretations of Harrison and Austin offer no greater insight than that of Williams, who had argued that Vergil's use of Catullus was wholly unintentional; also, none leave room for a reader's response beyond a basic appreciation of Vergil's skill.

The individual line at 6.460 is the most obvious reference to the Catullan poem, but as many critics have noted,¹⁵ there are more subtle echoes in the surrounding lines. In Catullus' poem, the lock of hair continues with an oath:

*invita: adiuro teque tuumque caput,
digna ferat quod si quis inaniter adiuravit:
sed qui se ferro postulet esse parem? (40-42)*

¹³ Harrison 241.

¹⁴ Austin 164.

¹⁵ Skulsky (1985), Johnston (1987), Wills (1998). Wills in particular offers a word-by-word analysis, p. 293.

Unwillingly: I swear by both you and your head,
which if anyone swears vainly, let him bear a worthy fate;
but who can claim that he is equal to the blade?

Aeneas' speech to Dido contains many similar elements, albeit in a slightly different form. Much like the lock's oath made to Berenice and her head (*adiuro teque tuumque caput*), Aeneas swears by the stars, the gods above, and the faithful under the earth (6.458-9: *per sidera iuro/per superos et si qua fides tellure sub ima est*) immediately before he tells her he left unwillingly. Just as the lock claims to be unequal to the power of the sword in line 42, Aeneas explains to Dido that he left her through the orders of the gods (6.461: *iussa deum*) which was a force that he was equally compelled to follow. When Aeneas first sees Dido in the underworld, he begins by mentioning the sword (6.457: *ferro*) that she used in her suicide. Her use of his sword is a detail of her death that Aeneas should technically be unaware of. His mentioning of it is therefore surprising, and one plausible explanation for its appearance in Aeneas' speech is that it is able to provide a further link to the Catullus poem. As this occurs just two lines before the echo of the Catullan line, the scene also inevitably brings to mind the blade (*ferro*) from line 42 that severed the lock from Berenice's head.

As has been pointed out, particularly by Wills in his explanation of Vergil's use of divided allusion,¹⁶ it is also likely that this speech of Aeneas with its Catullan references brings to mind scenes from Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, both the conversations between Aeneas and Dido and the events leading up to Dido's suicide. When Aeneas first

¹⁶ Wills "Divided Allusion: Virgil and the *Coma Berenices*." 293-302. (See also Lyne p. 190-193.) Wills describes divided allusion as a technique in which Vergil, taking a single passage from his source, would place different portions of that passage in separate locations of his text. Because each portion of the allusion came from the same original reference, Wills argues that they serve to thematically connect the various parts of Vergil's text (279).

announces to Dido that he must leave her land at the command of the gods, he tells her that the messenger sent by Jove himself carried his orders through the swift winds, and he swears this by both their heads (4.356-7: *nunc etiam intepres divum, Iove missus ab ipso/(testor utrumque caput) celeris mandata per auras/detulit.*). In this conversation, when he first demonstrates that he will be leaving unwillingly (4.361: *non sponte*), he swears to her in words strikingly similar to the oath sworn in Catullus, particularly the parallel, noted by Wills, between the *utrumque caput* of Aeneas' oath and *teque tuumque caput* sworn by the lock of hair. Wills here also draws a connection to the words of Ariadne in Catullus 64. He argues that Vergil, in his divided allusion, is referring to both poems to draw attention to the fact that Aeneas, like Theseus before him, deserted a woman on African shores.¹⁷ Additionally, Wills seeks out another instance of *invita* in the *Aeneid* that completes the allusion begun by Aeneas in Book 6. He argues that the words of Juno to Jupiter in Book 12 provide that connection:

*“ista quidem quia nota mihi tua, magne, voluntas,
Iuppiter, et Turnum et terras invita reliqui.”* (12.808-9)

“Indeed because your will was known to me, great Jupiter, I left Turnus and the earth unwillingly.”

Juno ascends to the sky just as the Coma Berenices had done, but Wills does not treat her as a parallel to Aeneas; instead, because of both her use of *invita* and her role in the death of Dido, Wills instead claims that Juno emerges as “implicated in the story of Aeneas’ departure and his ascent to the sky,”¹⁸ as a *regina* even more significant to the fate of Aeneas than Dido had been.

¹⁷ Ibid. 294.

¹⁸ Ibid. 299.

The final lines of Book 4, Dido's death scene, provide another parallel with Catullus' poem. Aeneas' Catullan echo in Book 6 inevitably brings to mind the particulars of Dido's death, the exact details of which he himself should be unaware, although, as we have seen, he is puzzlingly able to refer to them when he speaks to her. As she lay dying, a sacrifice of a lock of her hair was required as an offering to Proserpina before her soul was allowed to be released from her body (4.698-9: *nondum illi flavum Proserpina vertice crinem/abstulerat*). Dido was unable to cut or dedicate the hair herself, but Juno took pity on her and sent Iris to perform the sacrifice. Berenice and Dido, both African queens, are so similar as to be sacrificing blond locks (66.62: *devotae flavi verticis exuviae*, and 4.698: *flavum...crinem*), and so Dido's death inevitably invites the reader to draw comparisons between the two women. Their sacrifices occur for different purposes; while Dido's hair must be cut so that she may enter the underworld, Berenice herself makes her sacrifice for her husband's safe return from battle. Nonetheless, because both women have locks of hair dedicated, the manner of Dido's death is the first of the connections to Berenice and Catullus 66. The similarity sets the reader up for the Catullan words of Aeneas in Book 6; although his words at 6.460 are necessarily jarring at first, they are easily connected, by way of Catullus 66, with Dido's death scene in Book 4.

IV. Callimachus, Catullus, and the Gender of the Lock

Any examination of Vergil's source for 6.460 must take note of the fact that Catullus himself used the Greek Hellenistic poet Callimachus as the original source for the story of the lock of hair dedicated by Queen Berenice. The fact that Catullus claims

that his poem is merely a translation of Callimachus' own *Coma Berenices* (from his *Aitia*, Callimachus' most famous and influential work for Roman poetry in the first century BC)¹⁹ complicates our reading of Catullus' poem, as well as Vergil's intertextuality with it. The act of "translation" that Catullus undertakes is itself a type of intertextuality²⁰; however, because the Callimachean poem is fragmentary it can be difficult to assess the exact relationship between Catullus' poem and its source. Those scholars, such as Gutzwiller, who have attempted to examine Callimachus independently from Catullus and his version see evidence of his characteristic ironic detachment at work. Gutzwiller claims that the Callimachean original was a continuation of the familiar theme of young maidens (and men) who dedicated locks of hair to mark their entrance into adulthood.²¹ However, with the *Coma Berenices*, Callimachus was expected to write of a dedication that took place under very different circumstances. Berenice and Ptolemy were already married when the poem was composed, and the lock of hair promised in exchange for his safety in battle and dedicated upon his return represents instead the "joys and fears of a loving couple already yoked by marriage."²² The union between an Egyptian king and queen involved a sharing of monarchic power, as well as mutual desire. This type of rule was quite unfamiliar to Greek society and thus its characteristics were shared with the Greek world in part through the poetry of Callimachus.

Placed in the position of having to write about the implausible claim of the astronomer Conon that Berenice's dedication had become a constellation, Callimachus

¹⁹ Knox 153.

²⁰ In his analysis of Catullan and Callimachean similes, Hunter notes that translation bears much in common with intertextual similes, but hesitates to determine where the act of translation lies on the intertextuality spectrum (103).

²¹ Gutzwiller 369.

²² Ibid. 372.

managed to create a poem that speaks in (seemingly sincere) praise of the queen while at the same time revealing the poet's own ironic view of the lock of hair. In particular, having the lock of hair swear its oath by Berenice's head invites a sense of amusement rather than pathos. As is typical of Callimachus' poetry, here he plays with the balance between "absolute seriousness and entire deflation."²³ Gutzwiller notes that the poem has two voices; that of the detached narrator, and that of the mourning lock of hair. By separating his own voice from that of the hair within his poem, Callimachus is able to maintain his own personal skepticism about the catasterism while still speaking in praise of the event. In Gutzwiller's reading, in this separation of the two voices the lock is given a distinctly feminine voice. She sees the lock as taking on the voice of a maiden who laments the fact that she, unlike Berenice, will never be married. This is demonstrated specifically by the regret the lock of hair expresses at no longer having access to its mistress' perfumes, which were only worn by married women and thus symbolized a married woman's sexuality.²⁴ However, although the lock does speak in a plaintive tone that could be characterized as feminine, the subject of separation more likely brings to mind and provides a parallel for the relationship between the king and queen.

Callimachus' use of a variety of terms of both masculine and feminine grammatical gender when referring to hair in his poem adds to the ambiguity of whether the lock should be perceived as masculine or feminine. After it has been dedicated the lock pities the mourning of its "sister locks" (κόμαι ... ἀδελφαί 51). However, when it is speaking specifically about itself, the lock consistently uses terms for hair of masculine grammatical gender, βόστρχον (line 2) and πλόκαμος (line 62). At best, in Callimachus

²³ Hutchinson 32.

²⁴ Gutzwiller 381.

the gender of the lock is ambiguous. This does not appear to be the case in Catullus' reworking of the subject. When speaking of the rest of Berenice's hair, he translates using the Latin calque for Callimachus' "sister locks" (*comae...sorores*). Elsewhere, the lock is rendered as grammatically feminine, with both *coma* (repeated in 93) and *caesariem* (8). In particular, *caesariem* is an unusual choice in this context, as in all other instances the term is used to refer to the entire head of hair as opposed to individual locks.²⁵ Catullus may have chosen to use *caesariem* because of its aptness in the meter of his poem, but it is nonetheless an unexpected use. The lone masculine term in Catullus' version is in line 47: *quid facient crines cum ferro talia cedant* ("What can hairs do when such things yield to the sword?"). The same phrase was seen in Callimachus's rendering of the line, where he also uses the masculine: *τὶ πλόκαμοι ῥέξωμεν, ὅτ' οὔρεα τοῖα σιδήρῳ / εἰκονσιν;* (47-8). It is worth noting that they are both at this point referring to the fate of hair in general, as opposed to the experience of this particular lock; in contrast the lock that is the speaker of the poem is always of masculine grammatical gender in Callimachus' poem, but feminine in Catullus'. Also, Catullus at no point employs what is perhaps the most common word for hair, the masculine *capillus*. Beyond the differences used by the two poets for the lock of hair, Catullus creates a more feminine setting for the dedication of the lock. At the opening of the poem, the hair describes its dedication to the gods by Berenice. In Callimachus' poem, it is given to the general pantheon of divinities (*πᾶσιν...θεοῖς* line 9). Catullus, however, renders these divinities as the specifically feminine *multis...dearum* (line 9). This was a shift that Fordyce was unable to explain, except to classify it as natural enough not to require the emendation to the

²⁵ Fordyce 330.

cunctis...deorum suggested by Haupt,²⁶ perhaps because the lock was dedicated specifically at the temple of Arsinoe, also known as Aphrodite Zephyritis.²⁷ Nonetheless, it is clear in the poem that the lock is not dedicated to Arsinoe alone, and so Catullus' choice to limit himself only to the feminine gods is puzzling.

These word choices are not the only reason to classify Catullus' version as evidently feminine. Particularly where the two texts differ, he has been noted as employing a higher emotional tone than that which we see in Callimachus. In particular, Van Sickle has argued that Catullus' version emphasizes the "gossipy, somewhat tempestuous (feminine) character of the speaker."²⁸ It is this noticeably "feminine" tone that has caused many scholars to criticize Catullus' translation as an absurd exaggeration of the more restrained playful nature of Callimachus' original.²⁹ One of the most significant differences between the emotional levels of the two poems is Catullus' use of repetition, generally at points at which the lock expresses its attachment to Berenice. The amount of repetition employed in poem 66 is rather unusual even for Catullus, and points to a high emotional style, but one that is difficult to take seriously given the circumstances of the poem. There are three specific instances of repetition in Catullus' version (*invita...invita* 39-40, *afore...afore* 75-76, and *onyx...onyx* 82-83). Of these particular sets of lines, only one pair is extant in the Callimachus fragment and the repetition seen in Catullus (*quam me afore semper / afore me a dominae vertice* 75-6) is noticeably lacking in Callimachus' Greek (οὐ τάδε μοι τοσήνδε φέρει χάριν ὅσσον ἐκείνης / ἀσχάλλω κορυφῆς οὐκέτι φιζόμενος 75-76). Line 39 is of course the most well-

²⁶ Ibid. 330.

²⁷ Thomson 451.

²⁸ Van Sickle 499.

²⁹ Knox 163.

known of the lines of repetition because of Vergil's adaptation of it in the *Aeneid*.

Callimachus' version of this line has been lost, but even if it had contained a double *invita*, it would still be a striking line in Catullus. According to Wills, adjectives were more rarely doubled than other parts of speech by Latin poets because such repetition was so unnatural in prose speech; therefore it is not surprising to find that this *invita* is the only such repetition in all of Catullus,³⁰ and so it is fitting to read the effect of this line as one of heightening emotional expression.

This notable repetition in Catullus' lines was not borrowed by Vergil (unless we follow Wills' reading of the divided allusion and see the *invita* in Book 10 as a continuation of Vergil's borrowing,³¹ but even so the effect of the visible repetition in Catullus is not present in Vergil), and in addition he naturally changed the gender of the adjective to make it adequately apply to Aeneas. However, Vergil's readers would likely be familiar with the Catullus version, and even with these adjustments it is unlikely that his readers would have forgotten the feminine nature of Aeneas' source. I would argue, therefore, that the comically emotional and feminine tone of the line causes the reader to pause and calls into question Aeneas' own masculinity.

V. An Overview of Scholarly Interpretations of *Aeneid* 6.460

There are those scholars in recent years who have interpreted Catullus' seemingly lighthearted poem in light of the greater context of his work.³² In poem 65, which was

³⁰ Wills *Repetition in Latin Poetry* 73.

³¹ Wills "Divided Allusion: Vergil and the *Coma Berenices*" 299.

³² Griffith (1995). His major source on the matter was Wendell Clausen's article "Catullus and Callimachus" *Harvard Studies in Philology*, Vol. 74 (1970) p 85-94. Clausen mentions, but does not treat the line as seen in Vergil in detail.

written as an introduction to 66, he expressed his desire to write an original poem, but lamented that he was overcome with grief from his recent personal loss at the death of his brother, so that instead he was only able to produce an adaptation of Callimachus. Because of this, some have come to the conclusion that this adaptation is an extension of his expression of grief, and argue that Vergil would have read 66 with that understanding; therefore in their view his choice to refer to it at the emotional reunion of Dido and Aeneas is quite appropriate and in fact not at all incongruous. Griffith in particular has argued that poem 66 must be read in connection to 65, but that at the same time 65 “arouses our suspicions, because Catullus’ confession that he is psychologically unable to write poetry takes such a poetically artful form.”³³ In particular, Catullus chose to end 65 with a simile of an apple slipping from a girl’s lap that suggests, while not going so far as to reproduce, a story from Callimachus (in book 3 of *Aitia*) of Acontius winning the hand of Cydippe with the gift of an apple.³⁴

Perhaps it is because we do not necessarily want to take Catullus at his word regarding poem 65 that Griffith can consequently feel free to ignore the more obvious reading of 66 and instead impose a more serious one on what appears to be naturally light-hearted and comic. Not only does he believe that 66 should be read as a serious work, but Griffith sees references within the poem to the funeral of Patroclus in *Iliad* 23. Griffith claims that Catullus used the Callimachus poem as a cover for this Homeric model that was more closely associated with grieving and loss: Achilles’ dedication of his hair at Patroclus’ funeral.³⁵ Since Achilles typically functions as the archetype of the

³³ Griffith 51.

³⁴ Hunter 101.

³⁵ Ibid. 53.

man cut down before his time, he argues that Catullus is obliquely referencing Achilles in this way because he was at that time mourning over the death of his own brother.

(Although Achilles does not actually die in the *Iliad*, Griffith points out that Patroclus' funeral is commonly seen as a symbol for Achilles' own mortality.) He also argues that Vergil would have been aware of this rather complex allusion, and with his Catullan echo offered his readers a "window" into *Iliad* 23. Therefore, although Catullus' poem on its own appears to be far from epic, Griffith argues that Vergil's use of this Catullus source in particular brings to mind the epic context provided by similarities with Patroclus' funeral.³⁶ Nevertheless, while these Homeric echoes may very well be present in Catullus' poem, ultimately it is not convincing to argue that with his Catullan allusion Vergil is taking it upon himself to correct and make visible to others that which that he saw present in Catullus, instead of simply using a mock-heroic source to call attention to certain flaws in his hero. Clausen and Griffith have shown that it is possible to read a more poignant interpretation of Catullus 66, but it does not necessarily follow that this interpretation must be imposed onto Vergil's use of the line.

Other scholars, instead of focusing on Vergil's relationship with his sources, have taken their interpretations of Vergil's intertextuality in different directions. In her analysis of the borrowing, Johnston takes the comparison between the role of the lock of hair and the part Aeneas plays in Dido's life even further than Wills does. She argues that because Dido is to be seen as a parallel to Berenice, and Aeneas as a parallel to the lock of hair, the sacrifice present in the Catullus poem is equal to Aeneas' abandonment of Dido. She goes on to argue that this abandonment ends up bringing about Dido's reunion with her

³⁶ Ibid. 56.

true husband, Sychaeus, in the underworld. Although most see Dido's fate as lamentable, and something for which Aeneas is in large part responsible, Johnston points out that Dido's fate is not completely tragic. In Book 4, Dido had expressed concern that her love for Aeneas would prevent her from ascending to the heavens,³⁷ and so it is not surprising that she ends up as a resident of the Fields of Mourning, where they reside who have died before their time. However, there are several other mythological women mentioned as dwelling in the same place, and their presence sheds light on Dido's lot. It has been noted that these characters serve as points of comparison with Dido, and provide some insight into our interpretation of her. Tatum sums them up nicely: "She was faithful to her husband's memory (like Evadne), yet not faithful (like Eriphyle); a suicide because of forbidden love (like Phaedra), but also an innocent victim (like Procris)."³⁸ Caeneus, as one who switches sex even as Vergil describes her, can represent Dido's own blurring of gender roles as the *dux femina* (1.364) of Carthage.³⁹

One important distinction between Dido and the others is that she is the only woman present in the Fields of Mourning who is able to be reunited with a man she loves, her husband Sychaeus. This is clearly not a completely happy ending for Dido, but it does bear some resemblance to the account of the husband and wife in Catullus 66. Berenice's sacrifice of her lock of hair was performed after the safe return of her husband Ptolemy. Aeneas' departure led Dido to suicide and once her hair had been sacrificed to the goddess of the underworld, her loving marital reunion was also achieved. There is no reason for Sychaeus to be in the Fields of Mourning except as a companion of Dido,

³⁷ *te propter eundem/ extinctus pudor et, qua sola sidera adibam*, (4.321-323): Because of you also, my sense of honor is destroyed, by which thing alone I was going to the stars.

³⁸ Tatum 437.

³⁹ Ibid. 438.

making his presence not only unique but also unexpected. Johnston argues that at the last glimpse of Dido's shade in the underworld, it is still unclear which of these two men has her final devotion.⁴⁰ It does seem that Dido has not fully recovered from her emotional affair with Aeneas. Nonetheless her silent dismissal of Aeneas' pleas and the characterization by Vergil of Sychaeus as one who is able to provide Dido with equal love (6.474: *aequat amorem*) indicate that we are meant to see that she does still have affection for her husband and that she willingly acknowledges that her fate is now with him.

Since Aeneas functions as the lock of hair in the parallel with Catullus' poem, the connection to events in Book 4 raises questions of why Dido's hair must also be cut in order for her soul to be able to enter the underworld. Wills posits that if Aeneas is to represent the lock of hair as seen in Catullus, then he also represents Dido's own lock of hair, and so it is in fact his departure that brings about her death.⁴¹ Everything that occurs after Aeneas leaves her shore would then be an inevitable result of his choice to do so, leaving Dido no choice in the matter. On the other hand, it is possible that it is merely a foreshadowing of Aeneas' own descent, particularly when it is noted that Aeneas' entrance into the underworld also requires a golden offering to Proserpina. Skulsky mentions that the act of cutting blond hair that marks Dido's death is echoed in Aeneas' plucking of the golden bough (6.141: *auricomos fetus*).⁴² Also, while it was Venus who in large part brought about the death of Dido, setting events in motion by causing her to fall in love, the same goddess assists Aeneas in finding his golden offering. Historically,

⁴⁰ Johnston 652.

⁴¹ Wills 300.

⁴² Skulsky 451.

the episode of the golden bough has provided another perplexing moment in the reading of Book 6. The Sibyl had told Aeneas that if he were fated to go to the underworld, the bough would come away from the branch willingly and easily (6.146: *volens facilisque*), but when Aeneas takes it, it is described as delaying (6.211: *cunctantem*). Significantly, neither of the golden offerings necessary to enter the underworld seems to come easily. There has been much speculation about what Vergil intended by this, and whether the reader is meant to see Aeneas in a less positive light because of it. I assert that the golden bough, hesitating as it does, simply anticipates Aeneas' likening of himself to the unwilling lock of hair and demonstrates to the reader why Aeneas is not yet a fully heroic character.

Arguing for Aeneas' inadequacy, Smith draws a comparison between him and the other heroes mentioned earlier in Book 6 who also descended to the underworld. Clearly these men are referenced by Vergil to provide parallels with Aeneas; however, in contrast to Hercules, Orpheus, and Theseus, Aeneas appears incapable of or uninterested in a heroic retrieval. Smith argues that it is the act of an attempted retrieval that Aeneas, as a hero, should be emulating. Instead, "he is not really another Orpheus, who might have rescued his wife by his song. Nor does he, like Castor, at least half-succeed in his rescue attempt by trading places, nor, like Theseus, does he make a bold foray to defy Death."⁴³ Rather, Aeneas' catabasis occurs in order that he can hear from Anchises what he must do to complete his true mission. It was never a stated part of his mission to retrieve Dido; in fact, she was always seen as a hindrance to his mission of founding Rome and until that moment he was not even fully aware that she had died. Therefore Smith's assertion

⁴³ Smith 311.

that “his very words, via the allusion to the lock...pointedly call attention to his failure as a hero in this aspect of his mission to the underworld”⁴⁴ is only partly true. This scene does point to his inadequacy as a hero, not because he could not retrieve Dido, but because as he continues to hesitate and look to his past instead of his future, he still longs to have a connection with Dido. Also, just as a lock of hair is dead once it is cut, so Aeneas’ desire to continue his connection to Dido is like a desire for continued vitality. This is of course a striking inversion of their actual situation in Book 4, where he is alive (incongruously) while in the realm of the dead.

Skulsky reads a warning about Roman imperialism in her interpretation of Aeneas’ use of the line, which like the serious readings of Catullus 66 by Griffith and Clausen seem to be attributing more weight to this individual line than Vergil would have intended. However, her interpretation of the allusion does strengthen the argument that Aeneas is at the moment showing himself to be an imperfect hero. She claims that initial shock upon seeing these mock-heroic words coming from Aeneas, “immediately distances us from the hero whose grief has begun to elicit a measure of sympathy.”⁴⁵ Aeneas’ reference to the *Coma Berenices* (a reference that he as the speaker would not have realized) does not have the effect he desired of placating Dido. Instead it emphasizes his future success, and his eventual deification, which came at the price of her downfall. This stark contrast between his intention and the reality of the effect of his words also serve to make him appear ridiculous in this scene. Skulsky goes on to argue that from here we are moved to consider the “dehumanizing effect of Aeneas’ political

⁴⁴ Ibid. 311.

⁴⁵ Skulsky 454.

success;” however that theme is far more prevalent in the latter half of the *Aeneid*, when Aeneas has better learned to move on from his past.

Adding another layer of interpretation to the echo, many critics have also been inclined to see Aeneas’ reference to the line as an allusion to his eventual ascent into the stars as well.⁴⁶ This seems to be a fair assumption since in the connection made between the two poems Aeneas has essentially taken on the role of the lock of hair, which in Catullus’ poem had itself become a constellation. However, Wills also argues that there is more to be drawn from this connection. He claims that in light of the historical context of Rome’s recent trouble with Cleopatra, Vergil’s reference to Catullus’ poem in the *Aeneid* cannot simply be a straightforward borrowing. Instead, given that Catullus was himself writing about “Ptolemaic patronage and politics” in poem 66 he claims that Vergil must have had Cleopatra in mind not only when writing about Dido, but also when alluding to Berenice.⁴⁷ Like Cleopatra, Dido was seen as a threat to the success of the Roman mission, an alluring African queen who provided a dangerous distraction for a Roman hero and whose own empire could have posed a threat to Rome itself, had she survived. Drawing a connection in this way between Dido and Cleopatra (by way of Berenice) Wills suggest that Aeneas, by taking on the words of the lock of hair, can also be read as a parallel to Marc Antony; this interpretation of Aeneas’ character develops further the reading of him as both absurdly mock-heroic and effeminate.

⁴⁶ Specifically: Johnston (1987), Lyne (1994) and Wills (1998).

⁴⁷ Wills 288.

VI. Dionysus, Marc Antony, and the Effeminate Aeneas

It has been demonstrated that Aeneas' words at 6.460 were borrowed from a source in Catullus' poem that was feminine in nature. In addition to the apparent feminine tone of the lock of hair whose words Aeneas borrows, another aspect of his characterization that renders him as effeminate is his association with the god Dionysus (who was often characterized as of ambiguous gender himself), and by extension, his association with Marc Antony. These connections first become apparent in the context of Catullus' poem. When Aeneas borrows the words of Catullus' lock while speaking to Dido in the underworld, he evokes the sentiments that the lock expressed not only in that line, but also throughout the entire poem of Catullus, and these sentiments shed more light on his character. As the poem continues, the hair, which has now been turned into a constellation, is not satisfied with its new fate. Instead, it continues to speak emotionally in lamentation of its situation:

*non his tam laetor rebus, quam me afore semper
afore me a dominae vertice discrucior.* (66.75-6)

I am not so much made happy by this state of affairs as I am tortured that I will always be separated, separated from the head of my mistress.

Although he does not openly express the same sentiments, Aeneas' position can be interpreted in very much the same way. Despite the fact that he has a promised future and greater fate awaiting him in Italy, he has shown himself at this point in the epic as tentative in going forward, and therefore his words to Dido express not only the regret that he feels for the part he played in her death, but also his profound feelings of hesitation. In speaking thus about himself, particularly in an address to an African queen, he easily brings to mind the image of Antony dallying in Egypt with Cleopatra.

When the empire was divided among the triumvirs, and Antony had governance in the East, he found Dionysus to be a model well suited to the wine-drinking, elegant, and worldly image and lifestyle he preferred.⁴⁸ This association with Dionysus served him well in the early days of the triumvirate, and he was well received in the East. Plutarch shows us that upon arrival at Ephesus, the Greeks welcomed him as “Dionysus bringer of joy, gentle and kind.”⁴⁹ His victory in Armenia in 34 BC had proven that he was worthy to be hailed as the new Dionysus, and according to Zanker, it was at this point that he fully embraced his divine prototype; although he had up to then been content with the mythological connection alone, he would afterwards base his entire lifestyle around Dionysiac traits and behaviors.⁵⁰ Unfortunately for Antony, employing Dionysus as a model would eventually have a negative impact on his reputation in Rome. Although there were some in Rome who accepted this lifestyle, and even celebrated Hellenistic culture as he did and saw Antony as a fitting representation of the East,⁵¹ his adoption of this lifestyle was at odds with the traditional Roman character and therefore this image could be manipulated against him. In time, and through the machinations of Octavian’s propaganda in Rome, Antony’s lifestyle was soon discredited.

The harm Antony did to his reputation, and Octavian’s subsequent classification of him as soft and eastern, finds a parallel in Vergil’s portrayal of Aeneas at various points in the *Aeneid*. Readers have long seen a connection between Antony and Aeneas in this regard, particularly in Book 4. As Mercury descends to earth to give Aeneas the

⁴⁸ Zanker 46.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 46, Plutarch *Antony* 24.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 47.

⁵¹ Ibid. 61.

message from Jupiter, Aeneas is described as dressed in a fashion that brings to mind the luxurious dress Antony took up while in Egypt. Here Aeneas is shown:

*illi stellatus iaspide fulva
ensis erat Tyrioque ardebat murice laena
demissa ex umeris, dives quae munera Dido
fecerat, et tenui telas discreverat auro. (4.261-64)*

His sword was glittering with tawny jasper and his cloak, hanging from his shoulder, flashed with Tyrian purple, gifts that wealthy Dido had made, and she had separated the thread with thin gold.

This description closely matches the image that Octavian and his allies had taken pains to create at Rome for Antony, an image of him being corrupted by this lavish, eastern way of life. According to Cassius Dio, Antony

wore an oriental dagger in his belt, and dressed in a totally unroman fashion. He appeared in public either on a *kline*, as Dionysus, or on a golden throne, like a king. He commissioned paintings and statues of himself with Cleopatra, he as Osiris or Dionysus, she as Selene or Isis. More than anything else this created the impression that she had cast some kind of spell over him. (50.5)⁵²

This association of Cleopatra as the mastermind behind Antony's eastern, Hellenistic reputation was an element that was easy for his political allies to exploit. Although these paintings and statues themselves were not at Rome, according to Zanker there were plenty of suitably effeminate statues of Dionysus that could be linked to Antony by those who wished to damage his reputation. M. Valerius Messala Corvinus in Rome had even written two polemics against him (now lost) that severely criticized both these statues in Egypt and Antony's Asiatic style of oratory. In these he most likely developed his criticism by negatively linking both to the Hellenistic influences of Cleopatra's Egypt.⁵³

In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas was not only generally described as lavish and eastern, but he as well suffered similar criticism most sharply at the hands of his own enemies. In

⁵² Ibid. 57-8.

⁵³ Ibid. 58.

Book 4, Iarbas, a suitor previously rejected by Dido, had spitefully described Aeneas and his men as luxurious and effeminate:

*ille Paris cum semiviro comitatu
Maeonia mentum mitra crinemque madentem
subnexus.* (4.215-17)

That Paris with his assembly of half-men, a Phrygian cap tied under his chin and his hair wet [with ointment].

Not only is his retinue classified as effeminate, Aeneas himself is described as wearing a hat (*mitra*) that is doubly an insult, as being both foreign and one typically worn by women.⁵⁴ Aeneas' reputation as a man who was both effeminate and luxurious to a fault was carried over into the latter half of the *Aeneid* as well. Therefore, it would seem that Dido's effeminizing influence lasted well past their separation and her death, indeed even up to the end of the *Aeneid*. In the final book of the epic, Turnus similarly spoke contemptuously of Aeneas before meeting him in battle, encouraging his spear:

*“da sternere corpus
loricamque manu valida lacerare revulsam
semiviri Phrygis et foedare in pulvere crinis
vibratos calido ferro murraque madentis”.* (12.97-100)

“Allow me to lay low the body and to destroy the breastplate of the effeminate Phrygian, torn away by my strong hand and to sully his hair in the dust, hair that had been curled by a hot iron and dripping with myrrh.”

We might expect Dido's influence to have been diminished at such a late point in the *Aeneid*, but if anything, Turnus' description is harsher than Iarbas'. Here the insult of “half-man” has been transferred from the men of Aeneas to Aeneas himself. Also, while Iarbas has described Aeneas' hair as dripping (*madentem*) with some sort of ointment,

⁵⁴ Williams 350.

Turnus takes the image of luxury and self-indulgence much further and paints a ridiculous and contemptuous picture of his well-coiffed enemy.

Given these passages, it is not difficult to draw comparisons between Aeneas and Antony in that they were both perceived as having allowed an African queen to lead them astray into a life of soft luxury. Similarly, there is also a link made visible in the *Aeneid* between Aeneas and Dionysus, Antony's choice as his divine prototype. Surprisingly, this link appears in a simile that on the surface seems to be a straightforward comparison of Aeneas to the god Apollo (who notably was often associated with Octavian). In the famous hunting scene of Aeneas and Dido, Vergil offers us this simile:

*qualis ubi hibernam Lyciam Xanthique fluenta
deserit ac Delum maternam invisit Apollo
instauratque choros, mixtique altaria circum
Cretesque Dryopesque fremunt pictique Agathyrsi;
ipse iugis Cynthi graditur mollique fluentem
fronde premit crinem fingens atque implicat auro,
tela sonant umeris: haud illo segnior ibat
Aeneas, tantum egregio decus enitet ore.* (4.143-150)

As Apollo, when he leaves wintry Lycia and the flowing rivers of Xanthus and visits the maternal Delos, and renews the dancing, and mixed around his altars the Cretans and Dryopes and the painted Agathyrsians rage; [and as] he steps over the ridges of Cynthus and presses his flowing hair, shaping it with soft leaves and weaves gold in, his weapons sound on his shoulders: Aeneas was going no more slowly than he, so great is the glory that shines from his extraordinary face.

As has been thoroughly demonstrated by Weber, while the image at the end of the simile (*tela sonant umeris*) is clearly Apollonian, and there are some elements within that are ambiguous and could apply to either god, nevertheless the majority of the imagery evokes Dionysus.⁵⁵ Among those that are more applicable to Dionysus than Apollo, the

⁵⁵ For a thorough investigation of the Dionysiac elements of the simile and their implications, see Weber. He does address the portions of the simile that seem most natural to Apollo, such as the location Lycia, arguing

“renewing of the dancing” (*instaurat choros*) points not to Apollo, who in every other description of dances in his honor is always a spectator and never a participant. In contrast, Dionysus is regularly portrayed as the leader of dances, a central element for the religion of his followers.⁵⁶ In addition, the assembly described is made up of peoples from various lands (*mixti*), another feature that is common to the worship of the ecumenical Dionysus, and antithetical to Apollo, who was regularly characterized as the most exclusively Greek of all the gods.⁵⁷ Finally, within the description of his hair (which on the surface could apply to either god) there are terms that are characteristically feminine, and are therefore much more appropriate for Dionysus, who was frequently portrayed as effeminate. The term *mollis*, which was often used in descriptions of Dionysus’ dress and equipment, and that of his followers, is not equally associated with Apollo.⁵⁸ Therefore, its transfer to the headgear of the god being compared to Aeneas would easily bring to mind the image of Dionysus instead. This effeminacy is continued in the next line with *fingens*, a term which, when used (as here) to describe an act associated with hair, is almost always applied to a feminine or effeminate subject.⁵⁹ This image in particular, alongside the portrayal of Aeneas elsewhere as a soft and effeminate, clearly connects Aeneas with Dionysus. For those who have argued that Aeneas essentially becomes Antony in his interaction with Dido in Book 4,⁶⁰ this connection with

that *hibernus* is to be translated as “in winter” and would therefore it would more appropriately be associated with Dionysus (323-4). He does not offer any alternate reading for Delos or Xanthus, however.

⁵⁶ Weber 324.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 325.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 330. Weber does acknowledge that Apollo’s flowing hair (*fluentem...crinem*) is completely appropriate as Augustan poets represent him. It is only with *mollis* and *fingens* that he sees “implicit effeminacy.”

⁵⁹ Weber states (331) that of the ten other examples in Latin verse which use *fingens* in the context of hair setting four apply to men, but in each case it is a man of “precarious masculinity.”

⁶⁰ Parry 73.

Dionysus, Antony's divine prototype, reinforces that connection. From this Aeneas necessarily emerges by implication as soft and eastern.

The view of Aeneas as a representation of Dionysus is reinforced by two similes of Dido, comparing her first to a maenad (4.301-303) and then to Pentheus (4.469-70), two figures regularly associated with Dionysus. Similarly, the association between Aeneas and Antony is pressed further by a parallel connection of Dido to Cleopatra. Although it has been argued that there is no real connection between the two other than the fact that they are both African queens (who provide a distraction for Roman heroes)⁶¹ nevertheless there is some evidence that Vergil was drawing a closer comparison within the *Aeneid*. In Book 8, when Aeneas is given Vulcan's shield, among the images from the Battle of Actium is the death of Cleopatra; here she is described as pale with approaching death (*pallentem morte futura* 8.709). This must inevitably bring to mind the scene at the end of Book 4 when Dido is preparing to kill herself, at which point she is described in strikingly parallel language as *pallida morte futura* (4.644).⁶² If the similarities between the two living queens had not already been noted by the reader, their twin dying images effectively drive it home.

Altogether, the passages that show Dido and Aeneas as parallels to Cleopatra and Antony must inform our reading of the "*invitus regina*" line. Aeneas is often shown to be as eastern in nature as Berenice's lock of hair, and like the hair he also seems overly attached to his African queen, even when irrevocably separated from her. In the poems of Callimachus and Catullus, the lock of hair laments that it will no longer be able to enjoy the life it had with Berenice, particularly the enjoyment of the ointments from its

⁶¹ Pöschl 189n.39.

⁶² Williams 390.

mistress' head. Our view of Aeneas through Turnus' eyes in Book 12, however, shows that unlike the hair he is still enjoying some aspects of the life he shared with Dido in Africa long after he has left her. Just as he inappropriately expressed that he had been unwilling to leave Carthage and face his future, he clings to the remnants of their relationship throughout the second half of the epic as well. As many have noted, the gifts Aeneas and his men take with them from Dido are mentioned at key points in these later books as well.⁶³

In addition, Dido's connection to Cleopatra exists as more than a simple parallel to Aeneas' Antony. When Aeneas quotes from the lock of hair, he effectively casts Dido as the Berenice of Catullus' poem. Aside from the fact that they were both queens in Africa, Berenice and Dido do not at first seem to have much in common; Berenice was ruler of Egypt with her husband Ptolemy while Dido as a widow was ruling Carthage alone. Both women do have their hair cut, and their blond locks are then offered to the gods (albeit for very different purposes), but there is otherwise nothing in the *Aeneid* to connect Dido directly to the Berenice of Catullus. However, Cleopatra, whose relationship with Antony has much in common with that of Dido and Aeneas in Book 4, was directly descended from Berenice. Dido's similarity to Cleopatra offers the missing link between the two, and bears on our understanding of Aeneas as a character. In this way Cleopatra is able to provide a clear connection between the two women, as well as the two poems of Vergil and Catullus. In particular the view of Dido and Aeneas together

⁶³ Petrini (35): the horse given to Iulus (5.570-2); a gold vessel offered as a reward before the night mission of Nisus and Euryalus (9.263-66); cloaks placed on Pallas' corpse (11.73-75).

in Book 4, which was spread by Rumor, presents the spectacle of the two of them and inevitably reinforces the image of them as similar to Antony and Cleopatra:

*venisse Aenean Troiano sanguine cretum
cui se pulchra viro dignetur iungere Dido:
nunc hiemem inter se luxu, quam longa, fovere
regnorum immemores turpique cupidine captos.* (4.191-94)

Aeneas had come, born of Trojan blood, to whom beautiful Dido thought it worthy to join herself in marriage: now they enjoy winter, as long as it is, together in luxury, forgetful of their kingdoms and captivated by shameful love.

The personified Rumor chooses to classify their union in wholly negative terms, and this slander of them was able to stir up the resentment of Iarbas, which therefore influenced his later insulting description of Aeneas. Here they are both described as indecent in their love at least in part because they are neglectful of their obligations to their respective nations. It is this type of malicious accusation that would have been similarly effective in discrediting Antony in the Rome of the early Principate.

VII. Aeneas/Apollo and Dido/Diana

A close reading of the relationship of Dido and Aeneas in light of recent historical events of Rome seems to clearly cast Aeneas as both Antony and his divine prototype Dionysus, and Dido as Cleopatra. However, a review of one of the starting points of that link, the simile to Apollo, shows that taking it at face value as being truly a comparison to Apollo will offer a reading of Aeneas' relationship to Dido that is quite different, but which nevertheless still brings the reader back to Ptolemaic Egypt. In Book 1 when Dido was first introduced, she was compared to the goddess Diana in much the same way as Aeneas will be to Apollo in Book 4:

*qualis in Eurotae ripis aut per iuga Cynthi
exercet Diana choros, quam mille secutae
hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades; illa pharetram
fert umero gradiensque deas supereminet omnis
(Latoniae tacitum pertemptant gaudia pectus):
talis erat Dido, talem se laeta ferebat
per medios instans operi regnisque futuris. (1.498-504)*

Just as Diana trains her dancing bands on the shores of the Eurotas or through the ridges of Cynthus, following whom a thousand Oreads assemble on this side and that, she carries a quiver on her shoulder and walking about stands above all the goddesses. (Joys silently thrill the heart of Latona.) Such was Dido, so she carried herself joyfully among them, overseeing their work and the future kingdoms.

This is clearly a nod to Homer's simile of Artemis and Nausicaa in the *Odyssey*. Since antiquity many have noted that Vergil's use of this simile for Dido at first seems highly incongruous; unlike Homer's Nausicaa, she is no virginal maiden playing amongst her young maiden friends. Dido is instead fulfilling her role as the ruler of Carthage, giving laws to her men and apportioning the work of the city (*iura dabat legesque viris operumque laborem / partibus aequabat*; 1.507-8). Although it has been argued that Vergil has artfully reworked Homer's simile so that its elements more closely align with Dido's activities than with those of Nausicaa,⁶⁴ there is still the matter of Diana's marital status that is at issue. Dido is not only a widow, but she will soon give up her avowed chastity for Aeneas. In this way the simile at the moment of their meeting highlights the incongruity between Dido and her divine prototype, an incongruity that only increases as the epic continues.

Vergil's borrowing of Homer's simile provides another significant puzzling point of comparison between Dido and her supposed prototype. At line 502, Vergil was clearly interested in recreating the image from Homer (γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα Λητώ, "Leto rejoiced

⁶⁴ Pöschl 64. Pöschl claims that because the hunting sport of Artemis in Homer has been replaced by the "ritualistic performance" of Diana, and the setting has been appropriately moved to the shrines in Sparta and Delos, the Diana of Vergil's simile is comparable to the activity of Dido.

in her heart”: *Od.* 6.106). In Homer’s simile, the narrator is describing Nausicaa and her maids as they play in isolation; there is no audience within the scene (as Odysseus has not yet been woken up), and so the reference to her mother offers no difficulty for the reader. However, in the *Aeneid*, Dido is clearly described in the midst of the crowd at Carthage, and in sight of the Trojans. Because of this many have seen the image of Latona in Vergil’s rendering of this line as a description of the effect the sight of Dido has on her audience, namely Aeneas.⁶⁵ What has been little remarked upon is the oddness of placing Aeneas in the role of Diana’s mother as he gazes at her. If Vergil did indeed intend his mentioning of Latona to be read as a reference to Aeneas, it should be somewhat surprising to the reader as it hints at an incestuous element for the upcoming relationship between Dido and Aeneas. In particular, Vergil’s choice of the verb *pertemptant* to express Latona’s reaction is especially arresting, as it is much more commonly used of sexual love.⁶⁶ Such language is particularly striking within a simile to the virginal goddess, and immediately suggests that while Dido is similar to Diana in many ways, Aeneas will be eschewing any reverence for her chastity.

Aeneas is linked in a familial way with Dido, not only as her mother in their first meeting, but also as her brother when he is compared to Apollo in Book 4. This occurs just before his hunting excursion with Dido, a fitting setting for Diana and Apollo. Significantly, it is at this point that their relationship is consummated and their marriage (such as it is) begins. The Apollo and Diana similes (troubling as they may be each in their own right) cast Aeneas and Dido as the divine brother and sister, and direct the

⁶⁵ Williams 200.

⁶⁶ Hardie 26: Hardie is more interested in the ways in which the relationship of Aeneas and Dido can be cast as sibling-incest; however he makes mention of the hints of parent-child incest as the “first stages” of their relationship.

reader to a potential view of their relationship as incestuous. In that way it once again resembles an Egyptian Ptolemaic union, which so often took place between brothers and sisters; in fact the incestuous marriage was one social practice of the Egyptian royalty that the Ptolemies chose to adopt as they tried to position themselves as a part of Egyptian culture.⁶⁷ In the first of such unions, which took place in 276 BC between Ptolemy and Arsinoe (to whom the lock of hair is dedicated in Callimachus' poem), Ptolemy explained the practice, which would have been contrary to Greek customs, as evidence of their divine nature.⁶⁸ Callimachus was then chosen to write a poem in celebration of their union, in which he compared the royal couple to Zeus and Hera.⁶⁹ In contrast, while the Ptolemy and Berenice of Catullus' poem were not actually brother and sister, Catullus does playfully reference this type of marriage within his poem, as Berenice is described as lamenting her separation from her "brother" Ptolemy (*et tu non orbem luxti deserta cubile,/sed fratris cari flebile discidium* 21-22). It is possible to read *fratris* as cousin (which Ptolemy and Berenice were), but as Fordyce points out, it is more likely a reference to the honorific style that was commonly seen on inscriptions describing the monarchs as siblings.⁷⁰

Overall, the association of Aeneas with Apollo brings us to the same conclusion that his connection to Dionysus had done: as a comment on his relationship to Hellenistic

⁶⁷ Manning 96.

⁶⁸ Chauveau 31.

⁶⁹ It may be significant that the *Aeneid* calls attention to a similar brother-sister marriage between Jupiter and Juno. While Wills argued that Aeneas shared the use of Catullus' double *invita* with Juno, inherently linking the two characters, her use of the word is the reverse of his: she unwillingly left the earth to be reunited with her brother-husband, while he unwilling left the land of the queen with whom he had a relationship that bore the marks of an incestuous union. (After her speech, Jupiter even refers to her as *germana Iovis*, 12.830). It would seem that although Aeneas is destined for a glorious fate in the sky, he is only able to achieve it after he renounces a relationship that bears some similarity to those of the gods. Hardie (40) also comments on these parallels of incest.

⁷⁰ Fordyce 332.

Egypt. During the 30s BC, political invective in Rome was directed against what was perceived as an alien royal household, the Ptolemaic dynasty of Alexandria, “in which brother-sister marriage had become institutionalized as part of the practice and ideology of the ruling family.”⁷¹ Therefore, at the point when Aeneas speaks as the lock of hair, he has already been associated in multiple ways with Egyptian monarchy. However, at his reunion with Dido, he significantly does not take on the role of Ptolemy the monarch, but of a former body part of Queen Berenice. Hardie argues that the lock of hair (as Aeneas quotes it) is a misplaced synecdoche for Ptolemy himself; in this way the “marriage” between Aeneas and Dido, with its hints of incest, is neatly paralleled by the Ptolemaic union.⁷² However, Aeneas seems here to be indicating that, as much as he may have wished differently, he cannot properly fulfill the role of an African king. An incestuous union that would be perfectly acceptable between the gods and even for the Egyptian monarchy is not fitting for Aeneas. He is, however, perhaps still emotionally attached to Dido, and appears to long for a reunion (as does the hair whose voice he channels) regardless of the cataclysmic consequences. Given the circumstances of their reunion, he will of course never be able to fulfill that role. He goes forward on his mission in which he, like the lock of hair, will enjoy an existence in the heavens, apart from his queen. However, at this point he significantly continues to cling to the trappings of his life with her, and bears her influence to the end.

⁷¹ Hardie 28.

⁷² Hardie 34.

VIII. Conclusion

Arriving at the suggestion of incest from one line spoken by Aeneas in the underworld may seem to be pushing the concept of intertextuality to its limits; however, the value of this extended reading is that it reinforces the original sense of the inadequacy of our hero when he echoes the sentiments of a plaintive lock of hair. Overall, although the multiple readings and analyses of a variety of critics can offer just as great a variety of interpretations, it is important not to veer too far from the initial effect of these incongruous words. The shock felt when Aeneas utters words so unseemly for an epic hero inevitably causes the reader to question his heroic status. Also, by putting these words in the mouth of Aeneas, Vergil invites the reader to compare Aeneas to the speaker of Catullus' poem: a (feminine) lock of hair that was borne from, and longs to return to, the head of an Egyptian queen. As opposed to the type of intertextuality seen in the similes that Vergil borrows from Catullus, here it is fittingly Aeneas himself, the character, who nearly quotes Catullus, which further emphasizes his lack of self-awareness. He does not even seem to realize that it is his own words that paint him in a negative light, as if he does not yet understand what is required of him as the ancestor of Rome.

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